

Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

PLEASE PASS RODMAN/ADAMS/BORG FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER

1. APRIL ISSUE OF HARPER'S MAGAZINE CARRIES SECRETARY KISSINGER'S LETTER RE WILLIAM SAFIRE'S ARTICLE IN MARCH ISSUE, "PUPPET AS PRINCE." IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SECRETARY'S LETTER IS SAFIRE'S REPLY. HERewith FOLLOWS FULL TEXT OF SAFIRE REPLY.

2. THAT "SALZBURG FEVER" HAS STRUCK AGAIN. TO BE SPECIFIC:

3. 1. ON WHAT HE DISMISSES AS A STAFF PAPER: WITH SOME CAUTION, I DESCRIBED DR. KISSINGER'S SPEECH TO MR. BREZHNEV AS "THE FOURTH AND FINAL DRAFT."

4. OF HIS OPENING STATEMENT: FURTHER QUALIFIERS SURROUND THIS IN THE BOOK TEXT FROM WHICH MY HARPER'S ARTICLE WAS UNCLASSIFIED

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EXCERPTED. I USED THE DRAFT VERBATIM AND IN QUOTES BECAUSE, AS I WROTE, "HENRY CONFIRMED TO ME IT IS SUBSTANTIALLY WHAT HE ACTUALLY SAID."

5. THIS DIRECT CONFIRMATION WAS GIVEN IN DR. KISSINGER'S WEST WING OFFICE IN 1973, WHEN I SAID, "I HAVE THE FOURTH DRAFT OF YOUR PRESENTATION TO BREZHNEV PREPARING FOR THE '72 SUMMIT--WAS THERE A DRAFT AFTER THAT ONE?" HE REPLIED: "NO, THAT WAS SUBSTANTIALLY WHAT I SAID."

6. PERHAPS THE SECRETARY WAS MISLEADING ME THEN, WHEN HE HAD NO REASON TO; PERHAPS HE IS BENDING THE TRUTH A BIT NOW, WHEN HE HAS EVERY DIPLOMATIC REASON TO.

7. 2. ON THE SECRECY OF DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION:

8. GENERALLY, I AGREE. BUT THESE ARE FREQUENTLY REVEALED IN MEMOIRS YEARS LATER, AND AT THE CURRENT PACE OF EVENTS THREE YEARS IS A LONG TIME. IT IS ABSURD TO THINK THAT DR. KISSINGER'S MEMOIRS WILL NOT BE REplete WITH JUICY DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, AT LEAST THOSE THAT SHOW HIM IN THE BEST LIGHT.

9. ONE ASPECT OF THIS IS ESPECIALLY TROUBLING: THAT DR. KISSINGER ASSERTED TO THE SOVIETS THAT HE REGARDED THE NORTH VIETNAMESE 1972 SPRING OFFENSIVE AS AN EFFORT TO "DRIVE THE PRESIDENT FROM OFFICE." TO USE AN AMERICAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL MATTER AS THE REASON TO EXERT AMERICAN MILITARY MIGHT IS NOT ONLY IMPROPER BUT WAS A DISTORTION OF THE NIXON MOTIVE BY DR. KISSINGER. WILL "THE VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT," IF THERE IS AN UNEDITED VERSION, SHOW NO SUCH REFERENCE TO U.S. POLITICS? DR. KISSINGER NOW SAYS "THE SENSE OR THRUST OF MY REMARKS" WOULD SHOW OTHERWISE. THAT'S WORTH LOOKING INTO, AND, IF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE WANTS TO KNOW, IT COULD REQUEST THE FULL UNEDITED VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT, ALONG WITH THE FOURTH DRAFT OF THE PREPARED INTRODUCTION, TO FIND OUT JUST WHAT DR. KISSINGER WAS TELLING THE SOVIET LEADERS THREE YEARS AGO.

10. 3. ON THE PARENTHETICAL REFERENCE TO HAIPHONG
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HARBOR: THE SECRETARY IS ABSOLUTELY CORRECT. THE REFERENCE IS NOT IN THE FULL TEXT WHICH IS IN THE BOOK, BUT CAME ABOUT IN THE SHORTENING FOR ARTICLE FORM. (WHEN HENRY AND I WORKED TOGETHER TO PICK APART A CRITICAL ARTICLE BY JOE KRAFT, WE WOULD SEIZE ON SOME MINOR SLIP AND USE IT TO CAST DOUBT ON THE ENTIRE PIECE. THE MORE THINGS CHANGE . . .)

11. 4. ON THE WHEAT DEAL:

12. SECRETARY KISSINGER'S DESIRE TO PUT DISTANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE A BAD DEAL FOR THE UNITED STATES IS UNDERSTANDABLE. DURING THE MOSCOW

SUMMIT, JUST BEFORE MR. NIXON RETURNED FROM LENINGRAD, DR. KISSINGER MET WITH HERB KLEIN, JOHN SCALI, AND MYSELF, AND MY NOTES SHOW HENRY SAYING: "THERE'LL BE A GRAIN DEAL WHEN PETERSON GETS HERE. THE MARITIME DEAL WAS SCREWED UP BY THE UNIONS, AND THAT MUST BE HANDLED FIRST BEFORE WE CAN CONCLUDE THE GRAIN DEAL." DR. KISSINGER'S PRESENT COMMENT--"THE WHEAT DEAL WAS HANDLED BY OTHER AGENCIES"--IS TYPICAL OF HIS INCLINATION TO REVISE HISTORY TO LEAVE HIM BLAMELESS. IN MOST CASES, WHEN HE IS THE ONLY SOURCE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED IN MEETINGS, HE IS QUITE SUCCESSFUL.

13. 5. NOW TO THE MATTER WHICH SEEMS TO UPSET HIM MOST OF ALL, THE CHARGE THAT HE DENIGRATED RICHARD NIXON AT VLADIVOSTOK IN ORDER TO BUILD UP PRESIDENT FORD, USING PRESS SECRETARY RON NESSEN AS HIS HATCHET MAN.

14. "MR. NESSEN'S STATEMENT," SAYS THE SECRETARY NOW, "WAS MADE ON AIR FORCE ONE ON THE WAY BACK FROM THE FAR EAST," WHICH PROVES HE WAS "THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM THE EVENT" WHEN THE DEED WAS DONE. THE SECRETARY OF STATE IS IN ERROR, THE KIND OF ERROR HE MIGHT CHARACTERIZE IN OTHERS AS A MALICIOUS CANARD.

15. THE PARTY LINE RUNNING DOWN PRESIDENT NIXON'S FOREIGN POLICY SKILLS WAS BEGUN ON THE WAY TO THE FAR EAST WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER ABOARD THE PLANE. ACCORDING TO THE POOL REPORT FILED AT THE TIME, KISSINGER UNCLASSIFIED

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PERSONALLY BEGAN TO FLOAT OUT THE LINE: "IN TERMS OF PERSONALITY, FORD AND BREZHNEV ARE BETTER MATCHED THAN NIXON AND BREZHNEV."

16. WHILE IN VLADIVOSTOK WITH DR. KISSINGER, MR. NESSEN EXTENDED THE KISSINGER-BASED COMPARISON IN CONVERSATION WITH A FEW REPORTERS AT 2:00 A.M. EARLY SUNDAY MORNING AT THE PRESS HOSTEL. NESSEN SAID THAT NIXON "COULD NEVER LOOK BREZHNEV IN THE EYE" AS FORD COULD. SINCE NESSEN WAS NEW TO INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY, HE WAS ASKED HOW HE COULD BE SO SURE OF HIS INTERPRETATION, AND THE PRESS SECRETARY REPLIED: "I DUNNO. THAT'S WHAT HENRY TELLS ME."

17. THE POOL REPORT OF THE SUBSEQUENT TRAIN RIDE FROM VLADIVOSTOK TO A SOVIET AIR BASE CONTAINED THE THREE-

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YEARS, THREE-MONTHS CRACK; IT WAS MADE BY NESSEN WITH DR. KISSINGER PRESENT ON THE SAME RAILROAD TRAIN, POSSIBLY IN THE SAME DINING CAR. ("THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM THE EVENT," AS HENRY WOULD SAY.)

18. ONE OF THE REPORTERS ON THAT TRIP WAS JOHN OSBORNE OF THE NEW REPUBLIC, A MAN WITH WHOSE OPINIONS I USUALLY DISAGREE, BUT WHOSE CARE AND RESEARCHING OF FACTS IS A LEGEND AMONG THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS CORPS AND STAFF. THIS WAS HIS PUBLISHED ACCOUNT AT THE TIME:

19. "SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER INITIATED THE OPERATION AT THE EXPENSE OF HIS FORMER PRESIDENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF HIS NEW PRESIDENT. MESSRS. FORD AND BREZHNEV WERE STILL IN VLADIVOSTOK WHEN KISSINGER RECALLED DEFECTS OF MR. NIXON'S IN NEGOTIATION WITH BREZHNEV THAT HE, THE SECRETARY OF STATE, HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN HEARD TO MENTION. . . . THIS WAS STRANGE AND UGLY STUFF, COMING INDIRECTLY BUT AUTHORITATIVELY. . . KISSINGER DISCOVERED IN HIS NEW MASTER QUALITIES OF FLEXIBILITY AND RAPPORT WITH THE SOVIET LEADER THAT WERE SUDDENLY HELD TO HAVE BEEN LACKING IN RICHARD NIXON."

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20. WHEN IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE KISSINGER LINE WAS NOT GOING DOWN WELL, OR HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT WITH TOO HEAVY A HAND, THE SECRETARY OF STATE PROMPTLY DISSOCIATED HIMSELF FROM IT, TO THE ACUTE EMBARRASSMENT OF THE EXPENDABLE PRESS SECRETARY. DR. KISSINGER PROBABLY DID WIRE MR. NESSEN ON AIR FORCE ONE TO BACK OFF THE BACK-FIRING LINE. HE NOW PRESENTS HIMSELF AS THE SAVIOR OF THE FORMER PRESIDENT'S REPUTATION, AND AS A RESULT OF DR. KISSINGER'S LETTER TO HARPER'S WE HAVE THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S GENEROUS ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF MR. NIXON'S CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION. ("YOU HELPED, TOO, DICK." "GEE, THANKS, HENRY.")

21. IN HIS LETTER, THE SECRETARY OF STATE RAISES THE QUESTION OF "VERACITY." HIS ASSERTION THAT HE WAS NOT THE SOURCE OF THE NESSEN HATCHETING IS DEMONSTRABLY FALSE, AND HE IS FOOLISH TO TRY TO PUT FORTH A LINE THAT CAN BE SO READILY DEMOLISHED BY SO MANY WITNESSES. THIS RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS FIRST ASSERTION: THAT WHAT HE ACTUALLY SAID TO THE SOVIET LEADERS "IN NO WAY RESEMBLED" THE FOURTH AND FINAL DRAFT OF THE STATEMENT HE TOOK WITH HIM TO MOSCOW. (ANY NSC STAFFER WHO WENT TO A FOURTH DRAFT ON THE DAY OF HIS BOSS'S DEPARTURE TO MEET WITH THE SOVIET LEADERS, AND DID NOT HAVE THE ACTIVE INPUT OF HAK IN THAT DRAFT, WOULD HAVE TO BE OUT OF HIS MIND.)

22. 6. TO A KISSINGEROLOGIST, WHAT THE SECRETARY BLASTS AS UNTRUE IN THE ARTICLE IS NOT AS INTERESTING AS WHAT HE TACITLY CONFIRMS. THERE IS NO DENIAL OF THE MOST INTERESTING REPORT OF ALL: THAT MR. BREZHNEV, IN HIS DACHA WITH MR. NIXON AND A FEW OTHERS DURING THE MOSCOW

SUMMIT OF 1972, SHOUTED THAT THE HAIPHONG MINING WAS "BARBARIC." SUCH A CHARACTERIZATION WAS EXACTLY OPPOSITE TO THE SWEETNESS-AND-LIGHT LINE BEING PUT OUT IN BRIEFINGS BY DR. KISSINGER AT THAT TIME. APPARENTLY SOMEBODY TAKING NOTES IN THAT ROOM WROTE IT DOWN AND IT CANNOT BE FLATLY DENIED.

23. ONE REASON WHY DR. KISSINGER DOES NOT TRY TO CAST DOUBT ON THE VERACITY OF THE "BARBARIC" SHOUT--CERTAINLY A CRUCIAL POINT--WAS THAT IN RECOUNTING IT TO ME, HE DREW UNCLASSIFIED

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A PICTURE OF WHO SAT WHERE AT THE TABLE IN THE DACHA. THE KISSINGER DRAWING APPEARS IN MY BOOK, BEFORE THE FALL; IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO SAY NOW HE NEVER TOLD ME THAT, BECAUSE HIS SKETCH IS HIS SIGNATURE.

24. A FINAL THOUGHT: PICTURE THE SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AS WELL AS THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER TO THE PRESIDENT, SPENDING "HOURS" "SEARCHING THE FILES" AND MORE HOURS COMPOSING A LONG ANGRY LETTER TO A PUBLICATION ABOUT AN ARTICLE BY A FORMER COLLEAGUE. THE MIDDLE EAST CAN WAIT; THE URGENT BUSINESS THAT NEEDS TO GO THROUGH THE BOTTLENECK OF ONE MAN'S MIND IS SET ASIDE; MY ARTICLE IN HARPER'S MUST BE DISCREDITED AT ALL COSTS. SUCH ATTENTION IS FLATTERING, BUT THE PRIORITIES SEEM A BIT SCRAMBLED. SADLY, IT APPEARS TO BE ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE STEP-BY-STEP DECLINE OF A MAN WHO HAS CONVINCED HIMSELF THAT HE IS INDISPENSABLE, AND WHO THINKS THAT HISTORY WILL BE ONLY WHAT HE TELLS IT TO BE. (END TEXT.) INGERSOLL

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